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Culture of peace

International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World**Implementation of General Assembly resolution 56/5****Note by the Secretary-General******Addendum**

The present addendum contains the contribution of the United Nations Children's Fund and the University for Peace to the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (A/57/186). It contains supplementary information relating to section II of the report, on "Implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace".

Executive summary

The present addendum outlines the many activities undertaken by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the University for Peace to help developing countries generate the human resources, skills and expertise needed in their own countries and cultures to promote a culture of peace and non-violence within their own societies.

Information is provided on the efforts of UNICEF in the area of peace education, which is seen as an essential component contributing to the promotion of a culture of peace. The approach underscores the importance of promoting understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations as well as ethnic and religious groups. Also outlined are the actions of the University for Peace to foster a culture of peace through education, to advance sustainable economic and social development, to promote respect for all human rights and to ensure equality between

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men and women. The paper further describes its efforts to foster democratic participation, to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity, to support participatory communication with a free flow of information and knowledge and to promote international peace and security.

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Implementation of the Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace

I. University for Peace

A. Actions to foster a culture of peace through education

1. Universities throughout the developing world recognize that they must strengthen their teaching activities in such fields as conflict prevention, mediation, human rights, gender studies and other peace-related areas. However, many do not have the capacity, faculty, course materials or information sources to do so. For those reasons, the main priority of the University for Peace is to develop course materials in each of the key areas of peace studies and to disseminate the courses, using modern technologies, to universities in developing countries through carefully crafted partnerships. This will lead to a multiplier effect with international support: the University will be able to catalyse and assist in the strengthening of the capability of universities in developing countries to provide education, training and research on peace-related issues. Over time, developing country universities will thus be able to generate the human resources, skills and expertise needed in their own countries and cultures to mediate and prevent conflict, to build a culture of peace and non-violence, to respect human rights and to achieve the reconciliation and reconstruction of their societies.

2. In conjunction with the establishment of the UNESCO Chair in Education for Peace, the University for Peace is developing courses on: Gender and Peace; Human Security; Environmental Security and Sustainability; and Peace Education. Preliminary consultations are in progress on other issues for inclusion in the academic programme at a later stage: for example, Children and Conflict; Disability; and Urban Security. A series of courses has been organized for senior academics and experts from Central Asia, held at the Central European University in Hungary. The initial course was held from 6 to 31 May 2002. Courses are under development in Asia and the Pacific in collaboration with Mahidol University in Bangkok and in Central and Latin America. The University for Peace Africa Programme is also in the process of defining the courses most relevant to the countries selected for its pilot phase.

3. The University for Peace Foundation Course in International Peace Studies has been developed through a process of international consultation for inclusion in all University programmes and for dissemination to other universities. In accordance with specific provisions of the Charter of the University, this course will be compulsory for all University students.

4. The University is currently developing a new Masters degree programme in Peace Education, scheduled to begin in 2003-04. The programme will pursue two interrelated goals: capacity-building (leadership training) and educational reform and change in school systems (towards peace-building education). The design process to date has been multidisciplinary, international, and multicultural: a continuing and even broader consultative process is a priority for the University. This includes an ongoing dialogue with the organizations participating in the Programme of Action for the International Decade.

5. An international consultation on the status of peace education has been included as an important component of the work plan for the development of this degree programme. The meeting will be held in New York from 6 to 10 November 2002 and will be co-sponsored by the University for Peace and Teachers College of Columbia University.

B. Actions to promote sustainable economic and social development

6. A number of short courses have been implemented in recent months and more are planned in the field of natural resources and conflict prevention. The second year of the Dual Degree Masters Programme on Natural Resources and Sustainable Development offered jointly by the University for Peace and the School of International Service of American University in Washington, D.C., will begin in September 2002. A constructive relationship is developing with LEAD International (Leadership for Environment and Development) which will lead in due course to the teaching of courses in the area of environment and development at the University for Peace campus. The University will be holding the first session of its International Course on Development, Peace and Security from 7 to 23 November 2002.

C. Actions to promote respect for all human rights

7. In September 2002, two new Masters degree programmes will commence at University for Peace headquarters, leading to a Masters degree in Human Rights Studies and a Masters degree in International Law and the Settlement of Disputes.

D. Actions to ensure equality between women and men

8. In October/November 2001, University for Peace held an international training course on topics related to gender and peace-building for United Nations staff members working around the world. The course provided an opportunity for an extensive exchange of experiences among the participants. A Training Seminar with First Ladies of the Rio Group on Poverty and Development from the Gender Perspective was given by the University on 12 April 2002. A meeting of international experts on course development in the field of gender and peace to be held from 22 to 24 July 2002 will provide guidance on the content to be included in a Masters degree programme in Gender and Peace.

E. Actions to foster democratic participation

9. Besides its main activities broadly addressing democracy, human rights and peace, the University for Peace continues to work with International IDEA (Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance) on bilateral and multilateral projects in the area of the development of peace, democracy and human rights.

F. Actions to advance understanding, tolerance and solidarity

10. The University for Peace, in cooperation with Inclusion International, held an International Seminar on Disability: Inclusion for Peace, from 24 to 26 April 2002. Experts, parents and disabled persons came together to discuss new strategies of inclusion for peace, that is, overcoming discrimination to create peace. Funding has been found for potential cooperation in the development of courses and other activities in the field of civil-military relations, a topic being developed in Asia as well as in Central and Latin America. The University has been approached by military leaders to initiate activities in this field.

11. The University for Peace, in collaboration with the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, held an International Conference on the Lessons of the Tajik Peace Process for Afghanistan in Dushanbe from 17 to 19 June 2002. Fifty participants from 15 countries took part, together with international organizations and NGOs. Former United Nations mediators and leaders of both sides in the former Tajik conflict led substantive discussions about the negotiations leading to the June 1997 Tajik peace accords, whose fifth anniversary was commemorated, and identified future action to consolidate the peace process.

G. Actions to support participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge

12. The ways in which the media interact with issues of conflict, peace and security are becoming more and more a question of vital importance. The University for Peace has made substantial progress towards the establishment of its Institute for Media, Peace and Security. Funding has been obtained and the development of an innovative programme of research and training is under way. The Institute aims at two kinds of participants: persons from areas of recent, current or potential conflict; and persons from countries strongly concerned with international peace and security. It will provide academic courses at the Masters level (a 12-month degree programme and intensive one- to three-week short courses) and practical or operations-related training within the University's lifelong-learning dimension. The Institute assisted, in cooperation with the Government of Germany and other institutions, in the convening of an International Conference on Media, Conflict and Terrorism (7-8 May 2002).

H. Actions to promote international peace and security

13. Under the terms of its establishing Agreement (General Assembly resolution 35/55), the University for Peace is required to engage in research to help lessen obstacles and threats to world peace, etc. A partnership has been initiated with the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis, Austria to launch a research programme aimed at attaining a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of conflict. The United Nations University has agreed to participate in this programme together with other research institutions. The University has also entered into an agreement for the establishment at its main campus of a Latin American subsidiary office of the International Court of Arbitration, headquartered at The Hague. This prestigious institution wishes to strengthen its activities in Latin America.

14. Promising contacts have furthermore been established with the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the

Caribbean, based in Lima. A seminar was held in cooperation with the Centre and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) at University headquarters from 31 October to 1 November 2001 on the application of the Organization of American States (OAS) Firearms Convention and the corresponding OAS-CICAD Model Regulations. A second seminar was held from 3 to 5 May 2002 in cooperation with the Regional Centre and the Swedish Fellowship of Reconciliation (SWEFOR) on firearms issues for members of Central American parliaments. In addition, the World Centre for Research and Training in Conflict Resolution has been formally launched in Bogotá, under an agreement between the University for Peace and the Government of Colombia.

II. UNICEF

A. Peace education

15. In UNICEF, peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural, to resolve conflict peacefully and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.

16. UNICEF sees peace education as an essential component of quality basic education in which the content, learning processes and learning environment all work to promote a culture of peace. It also fits in with emphases UNICEF places on reaching disadvantaged and excluded groups, particularly those living in situations of violence, and on child-unfriendly learning environments. This approach is also in line with the Dakar Framework for Action, according to which:

"Schools should be respected and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace. Education programmes should be designed to promote the full development of the human personality and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 26). Such programmes should promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, and all ethnic and religious groups; should be sensitive to cultural and linguistic identities, and respectful of diversity; and reinforce a culture of peace. Education should promote not only skills such as the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict but also social and ethical values."¹

B. Examples of UNICEF field-based approaches

17. The following four country examples are taken from the 2001 country office annual reports.

18. In Guatemala, educators have sought to strengthen civil society through peace education, both within the academic sector and through the Catholic church. In the classroom, UNICEF advocated peace education as a fundamental theme for curricular reform. In the religious community, UNICEF promoted peace education through the Social Pastorate of the Archbishop of Guatemala and through the Office of Human Rights of the Archbishop of Guatemala. Through this initiative, 4,300 youth and 800 community and parochial leaders received training in peace education.

19. UNICEF strongly supported Indonesia's fourth education initiative on peace education and non-violent conflict resolution in Aceh. Specifically targeting adolescents, educators developed an innovative 21-module peace education curriculum for senior secondary schools that drew from Islamic precepts on peace and integrated peaceful conflict resolution traditions from Acehnese culture. Five thousand copies of the curriculum were printed and distributed to all senior secondary schools in the region. Despite the unstable situation in Aceh, 50 teachers and 24 youth leaders were trained to use the curriculum. Through them, the initiative eventually reached some 7,716 high school students (age 16-18) in 25 schools across five regencies. The donor provided additional support for expanded implementation in 2002 to 65 new schools and five Islamic boarding schools.
20. The peace education initiative in Wau, Sudan, involves the promotion of a culture of peace through inter-school drawing, sports and cultural activities. The programme demonstrates the value of living together and the sharing of facilities to promote peaceful coexistence and conflict resolution. UNICEF is currently supporting the development of a national curriculum for peace education, with specific guidelines and a teaching syllabus.
21. The nationwide expansion of peace education in Tajikistan was undertaken through the joint efforts of the Ministry of Education, the NGO Republican Education Fund and UNICEF. Implementation of the programme on peace education and tolerance supported by UNICEF over almost five years has shown positive results, including the promotion of tolerance and interpersonal communication skills among children. UNICEF has supported the printing of a manual on peace education and tolerance for primary school teachers and children.
22. In addition to the four preceding examples, many countries have begun to target peace education as an important area of concentration, among them Albania, Burundi, Papua New Guinea, Sierra Leone and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is hoped that this global emphasis on the value of peace education will result in the development and implementation of other peace education programmes in UNICEF-supported countries throughout the world.

III. Conclusions

23. Efforts should be made to strengthen the capabilities of developing countries to provide, within their own educational systems, relevant education, training and research on peace-related issues. Within this context, it is vital for them to reinforce their curricula by including topics such as conflict prevention, mediation, gender studies and other peace-related issues.
24. The importance of promoting social and ethical values through education is as vital as teaching children the importance of the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict. Moreover, education programmes should be structured to promote the full development of the human personality and to strengthen respect for human rights.

Notes

¹ Expanded Commentary on the Dakar Framework for Action, prepared by the World Education Forum Drafting Committee, Paris, 23 May 2000, para. 58.